INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN ART

BY

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

CONTAINING

THIRTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

'ART in India,' and 'art' in the modern world mean two very different things. In India, it is the statement of a racial experience, and serves the purposes of life, like daily bread. Indian art has always been produced in response to a demand: that kind of idealism which would glorify the artist who pursues a personal ideal of beauty and strives to express himself, and suffers or perishes for lack of patronage, would appear to Indian thought far more ridiculous or pitiable than heroic. The modern world, with its glorification of personality, produces works of genius and works of mediocrity following the peculiarities of individual artists: in India, the virtue or defect of any work is the virtue or defect of the race in that age. The names and peculiarities of individual artists, even if we could recover them, would not enlighten us: nothing depends

upon genius or requires the knowledge of an individual psychology for its interpretation. To understand at all, we must understand experiences common to all men of the time and place in which a given work was produced. All Indian art has been produced by professional craftsmen following traditions handed down in pupillary succession. Originality and novelty are never intentional. Changes in form, distinguishing the art of one age from that of another, reflect the necessities of current theology, and not the invention of genius: changes in quality reflect the varying, but not deliberately varied, changes in racial psychology, vitality, and taste. What is new arises constantly in Indian tradition without purpose or calculation on the part of the craftsman, simply because life has remained over long extended periods an

immediate experience. Tradition is a living thing, and utterly unlike the copying of styles which has replaced tradition in modern life. No such failure of energy as archaism represents appears in Indian art before the twentieth century.

In India, the same qualities pervade all works of any given period, from pottery to architecture, and all are equally expressive: the smallest fragment of a textile portrays the same as the most elaborate temple. In other words, there are no distinctions of fine and applied or decorative art and no unsurmountable barrier dividing the arts of the folk from the canonical arts. Indian art has always an intelligible meaning and a definite purpose. An 'art for art's sake,' a 'fine' or useless art, if it could have been imagined, would only have been regarded

as a monsturous product of human vanity. The modern 'fine' or useless arts are unrelated to life and speak in riddles—and hence the utter impossibility of inculcating a 'love of art' in the people at large. A race producing great art, however, does so, not by its 'love of art,' but by its love of life. In India, where no one discussed art (there is no Sanskrit equivalent for the modern concept of 'art'); where none but philosophers discussed the theory of beauty; and where sculptures and paintings were regarded, not as 'works of art' but as means to definite ends—there, art was an integral quality inhering in all activities, entertained by all in their daily environment, and produced by all in proportion to the vitality (not the kind) of their activity.

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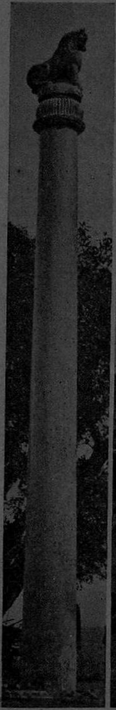

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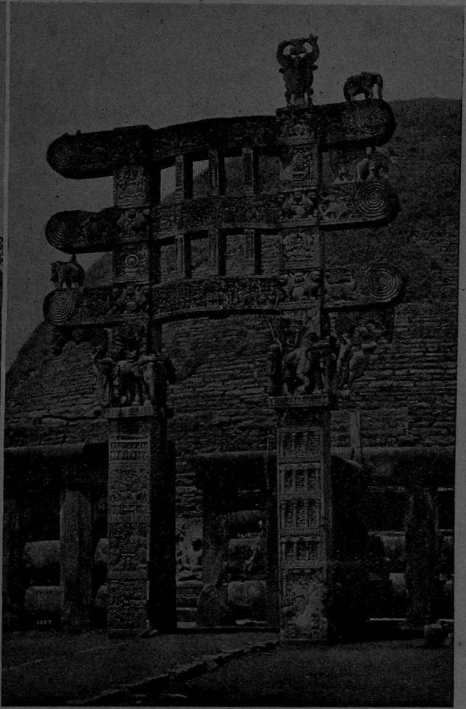

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MAURYAN AND EARLY ĀNDHRA

INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN ART

BY ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

SECTION THE FIRST VEDIC ORIGINS

EARLY VEDIC RELIGION—THE RELIGION of the Āryans in Northern India—consisted in the worship of the personified powers of Nature, in particular of Agni, Indra, Sūrya, Varuṇa, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Yama. These and other powers and beings were anthropomorphically conceived, and are described as wearing garments, carrying weapons, and driving in cars; they were worshipped with hymns and sacrifices, that they might bless and protect their worshippers. Magical incantations were employed to the same ends. The spirits of the ancestors were likewise invoked and served with offerings. The ritual grew in complication, and came to lie almost entirely in the hands of expert priests (Brāhmaṇs), amongst whom the

sacred texts were handed down orally in pupillary succession. There is no evidence, and little probability, that images of any of the deities were made, whether sculptured or painted.[1]

There existed also aboriginal (Dravidian) cults of various popular divinities, such as the Yakṣas, Nāgas, and other nature-spirits not yet received into the Brāhmaṇical pantheon; of a primitive deity, afterwards identified with Ṣiva, whose followers are referred to in the Ṛg Veda as worshippers of the Phallus-god (Ṣiṣna-deva); and of the Earth and other female deities. The industrial arts were

[1] The golden *puruṣa* which formed a part of the altar of sacrifice, and the effigy *kṛtya* of the magic rites, were probably symbols, and not in any sense representations. Mr. B. C. Bhattacharya, however, has summarised the evidence for the use of images in the Vedic period, and presents an almost unanswerable case—*Indian Images, Calcutta, 1921.*

mainly in the hands of the non-Āryan communities. It is possible that rude images were employed in the popular cults. Wood and brick were used for building. Iron, copper, silver, gold and lead were known. Many of the decorative motifs with Iranian affinities which survive in folk art to the present day must already have been in use. The caste system existed only in embryo.

SECTION THE SECOND

PRE-MAURYAN SCULPTURE

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN sculpture and painting, like that of the drama, appears to have been connected with ancestor cults and hero-worship. The Citra-Lakṣaṇa, an early Ṣilpa Ṣāstra, now known only in its Tibetan translation in the Tanjur, is chiefly devoted to a prescription of the proper manner in which a Cakravartin should be represented: the canon is set 'for kings and other beings' (the gods). So far as the *lakṣaṇa* of the Cakravartin are concerned, the *ṣāstra* probably dates back to pre-Buddhist times. In any case, the apotheosis of kings and the erection of funerary statues seem to have been characteristic of Indian civilization from the age of the earliest surviving monuments onwards. The oldest Indian sculpture so far known appears

to be the well-known 'Parkham Statue' of the Mathurā Museum (Fig. 1), which bears, according to recent readings, an inscription referring to Kuṇika Ajātaṣatru, of the Ṣaiṣunāga dynasty, who died in 618 B.C. Closely related to this image is the female figure, perhaps a Yakṣī, from Besnagar, now in the Calcutta Museum. Two statues found at Patna bear the names of other Ṣaiṣunāga emperors, Udayin and Nanda Vardhana, both of the fifth century B.C. The female caurī-bearer lately found at Dīdarganj, and now in the Patna Museum, may be equally early. With the same series may be associated the archaic five-legged bull in the Calcutta Museum.

The group of figures above referred to, while implying a long anterior development in wood or other impermanent material, represents the genuinely primitive aspect of

Indian art. The sense of this early art is not imaginative, but powerfully material. These human figures, over life-size, resting their immense weight firmly on the earth, are immediate and affirmative expressions of physical energy. Life is accepted without question or analysis: the solid flesh is not idealized. Neither philosophic introspection nor passionate devotion have yet affected art: there is no trace of romanticism or refinement. At the same time, this pre-Mauryan Indian art is not, like early Egyptian art, complete within itself, bounded by its material and representative achievement and of altogether mortal essence: it is not yet spiritual, rather than unspiritual.

Mr. Jayaswal's researches in the field of pre-Mauryan art have pointed the way to the most fruitful and the least explored sources for the

origins of Indian art: this early sculpture in an absolutely pure mode, springing directly from the earth it stands upon, alone supplies the key to subsequent developments. Here, for example, lies the explanation of the almost complete submergence of Hellenistic formulæ in the unified national schools of the Gupta age: we can follow from the seventh century B.C. to the sixth or seventh century A.D., and thence on, a continuous tradition; and we realise that this clear current flowed too powerfully and too immediately from native sources to have been seriously deflected by the foreign formulæ which it adopted and moulded to its own ends.

The immediate evidence offered for the new interpretations of what were formerly regarded as works of Mauryan date is palæographical, and still to some extent a matter of

controversy; but the conclusions are amply supported by the internal æsthetic evidence, which clearly demands an earlier dating of the primitive sculptures. It would be indeed surprising if the most powerful and original elements of this art, destined to remain prepotent for a millennium and a half, had not already found expression in the age of the great spiritual crisis. No lesser material force than this, no less complete and pure an acceptance of physical existence could have been a sure foundation for the Great Enlightenment—a term used here to designate, not merely the Mahā Sambodhi of the Buddha, but the awakening of the race from innocence to consciousness implied in the passage from Vedic to Vedantic thought.

SECTION THE THIRD

THE GREAT ENLIGHTENMENT

BY THE EIGHTH CENTURY B.C. PHILOSOPHICAL speculation had advanced; the doctrines of *karma* and *saṁsāra* had come to be generally accepted; and, by contrast with the merely temporary advantage of rebirth in a heaven, salvation (*mokṣa, nirvāṇa*) from the conditions of mortality was recognized as the highest good. This salvation or spiritual freedom could only be attained with the immediate experience of spiritual truth, not through the Vedic ritual nor by works. The meaning of life was only to be found in the knowledge of the Self, in the identification of all that is known with the knowing subject. This was a revelation that determined the whole subsequent development of Indian civilisation, alike in content and form. As such, it finds its first and purest expression in the Upaniṣads and, later, in Buddhism and

Jainism and other individual systems. Historically, it is of Kṣattriya rather than of Brāhmaṇ origin. Its expression in the Upaniṣads, afterwards formulated as the Vedānta, however, was early accepted by the Brāhmaṇs as the consummation and goal of the Vedic tradition, and constitutes the spiritual background for the whole subsequent development of the monotheistic faiths and of the Hindu social order. Buddhism and Jainism, developing on parallel lines, although in formal opposition to Hindu systems, long survived as heterodox persuasions—the former in Southern India until the seventh century, and in Bengal until the end of the twelfth, the latter to the present day.

It will be convenient here to summarise the formulation of truth according to the leading systems of the Enlightenment :

Upaniṣads: Identity of the individual consciousness (not the empirical ego) with the unknowable Supreme Self or Brahman which is 'not so,' the innermost principle of the Universe; unreality of the latter as extended in time and space, and consequently merely relative truth of doctrines of creation, transmigration, etc.

Buddhism: Association of existence with suffering; impermanence and causal origination of all phenomena; non-existence of any ego.

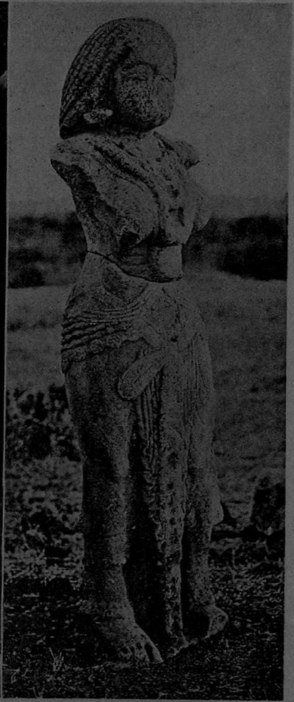
Sāṁkhya: Illusory association of plurality of knowing subjects (Puruṣa) with Nature, actual and potential (Prakṛti); the three factors, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, of the objective world.

Jainism: Soul (*jīva*) and non-soul (*ajīva*) linked by *karma*.

Sannyāsa (asceticism), *Tapas* (penance), and *Yoga* (concentration of thought) are favored by all these systems, in so far as they accommodate themselves to the concept of causality, as practical 'means' tending to realization.

None of these systems, in their origin, implied a cult of personal divinities, still less did they require a use of images. Even the *Yoga* mentions the Lord (Iṣvara) only as one among other suitable objects of meditation. For another reason, it was impossible that immediate effects of the Enlightenment should have been recognized in art: the mode of life at first associated with the conception of spiritual freedom is ascetic; and the explicit and implicit tendency of all the philosophic systems at

1. Kunika Ajātasatru:
Mathurā Museum



2. Yakshī: Besnagar
Calcutta Museum

PRE-MAURYAN

this time is to regard the arts (which had never yet been thought of as media for the expression of spiritual ideas) exclusively in their sensual aspect as means of enjoyment—and as the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* later expresses it, 'Nothing should be done by a Brāhmaṇ for the sake of enjoyment.' Cāṇakya classes musicians and actors with courtesans; Manu forbids the householder to dance or sing, and reckons architects and actors amongst unworthy men who should not be invited to sacrifices. In early Buddhist literature the painter is compared to the purveyor of aphrodisiacs; the Buddha even condemns the presentation of the Dhamma in an attractive literary form. And, in fact, the actual themes of artistic representation in this age cannot have been such as to invite the approval of those whose faces were turned away from the world. Only at a

much later period was there a conscious expression of spiritual ideas through plastic art, and only later still a distinction drawn between the sympathetic value and the spiritual content even of literary works.

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SECTION THE FOURTH

EARLY BUDDHIST ART—MAURYA, ṢUNGA AND EARLY ĀNDHRA[1]

ART OF THE MAURYAN PERIOD MAY BE said to exhibit three main phases, (1) the continuation of the pre-Mauryan tradition, now applied in some instances to the representation of Vedic deities. The most striking illustration of this development is afforded by the sculptured reliefs of Sūrya and Indra (figure 5) in the veranda of the ancient *vihara* at Bhājā, (2) the court art of Aṣoka, typically seen in the monolithic columns (figure 3) on which are inscribed his famous Edicts, and in which foreign (Iranian) elements predominate, and (3) the beginnings of brick and stone architecture, as in the case of the original stūpa at Sañcī, the small monolithic rail at Sāñcī, and

[1] For literature referring to Section Four see Appendix.

the Lomas Ṛṣi 'cave,' in the Barābar hills near Bodh Gayā, with its ornamented façade, reproducing the forms of wooden structure.

The beginnings of Buddhist art appear to be associated with the memorial monuments (*caityas*) erected on the sites of the Four Great Events of the Buddha's life, and in other places. Funeral mounds (*stūpas*) were, indeed, already erected over the divided remains immediately after the cremation of the Buddha's body; and he himself, before his death, is recorded to have spoken of 'four places which an Āryan worshipper should visit with religious emotion'. Each of the Great Events and sites was represented by a symbol; and these symbols, taken collectively, relate in a kind of pictorial shorthand, the whole story of the Buddha's life. Most of them occur abundantly on the punch-marked coins

of the fourth and fifth centuries B.C., a few appear for the first time at Bârhut and Sāñcī, and the majority survive in Indian Buddhist art to the end, side by side with the later developments. In the following table are given the sites, significant events, and symbols:

PLACE	EVENT	SYMBOL
Kapilavastu	Conception	Elephant
	Nativity	Lotus, bull
	Going Forth	Gate, horse
Bodh Gayā	Great Enlightenment	Bodhi tree with rail
Sārnāth	First Preaching	Wheel, often with deer
Kuṣinagara	Final *Nirvāṇa* (Death)	*Stūpa*

To the Ṣuṅga period (185—80 B.C.) must be assigned (approximately in chronological order), the sculptured railings and gateway at Bārhut, the stone casing, ground balustrade and plain railing at Sāñcī, the sculptured

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railings at Bodh Gayā, certain fragments at Mathurā, the earliest sculptures at Amarāvatī, and also the caitya-halls or churches at Guntupalle, Bhājā, Kondāne, Pitalkhorā, Ajaṇṭā (cave X), Bedsā, Ajaṇṭā (cave IX), and the early Jain caves at Udayagiri in Orissa. Taken collectively, the total amount of relief sculpture at these sites is very considerable. Sculpture in the round is hardly represented.

Except at Bārhut, however, the greater part of the sculpture seems to be secular or decorative, rather than definitely religious, particularly so in the case of the Jain caves in Orissa (where, however, there occur representations of Sūrya and of Māyā Devī or Gaja Lakṣmī); but this may be due to our inability to recognize the subject matter. At Bārhut the most important Buddhist sculptures are the numerous medallions illustrating Jātaka

stories, each with an identifying inscription; reliefs illustrating historical episodes of the Buddha's life; and pillars bearing in relief the figures of guardian *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs*, *nāga* kings and *devatās*—the nature spirits of popular cults embraced by Buddhist mythology and regarded as defenders of the faith. The Jātaka reliefs are excellent pieces of condensed story-telling, the representation of trees and land-scape full of interest and decorative beauty, the animals and human figures well understood and placed, whether singly or in groups. The Ṣuṅga sculptures at Sāñcī, on the other hand, are mainly decorative. That of the early caves, though always in relief, is exceedingly massive in character, and very clearly related to pre-Mauryan art.

It has been remarked of Mauryan and Ṣuṅga art by Sir John Marshall that the

sculptor was still bound by the law of frontality (*i.e.*, considering the composition from only one point of view), and that "the 'memory picture' had not yet given place to direct observation of nature". The first remark is obviously true as a fact of technical procedure; the second involves a certain misinterpretation of Indian æsthetic psychology, and deserves a longer discussion. The memory picture—or rather, a synthetic image based on past experience—is from first to last the essential foundation of Indian art: we cannot recognize here any such innate striving towards realism as that which becomes apparent, soon after the primitive developments, in Greek and Christian art. The Indian method is always one of visualization—unconscious in primitive, systematized in the mature art. Indian art is always a language

employing symbols, valid only by tradition and convention. The symbol may be little more than a geometrical design, as in the case of the lotus rosette denoting miraculous birth, or anthropomorphic as in the later Nativities, where Māyā Devī is represented as a woman, either with or without the infant Bodhisattva. In both cases equally, there is definite and comprehensible statement; but the form of the statement is always that of the art language of the day (we may illustrate this by pointing out that perspective representation is a part of the art language of our own times, while it does not by itself make modern art superior to ancient art); and this language is never one of 'direct observation of nature'. It is true that a tendency to realism is evident in the Gandhāra sculptures, but there it is of Western origin, and it does not prevail in Indian or

Chinese art which preserve the formulæ alone, and not the intention of Greco-Buddhist sculpture. On the other hand, we do recognize in Indian art of certain periods, and miss at other times, a certain virtuous and moving, indeed, an essential quality, which is often spoken of as truth to Nature : the development of this truth we describe as progress, the loss of it as decadence, but it must not be confused with the assimilation of the symbol to natural appearance, which, by itself, is a technical and not an æsthetic progress. The point to be made is that this truth is not the result of observation (of models) but of feeling (empathy, *einfühling*, *sādhāraṇa*, with reference to the artist in the first instance, rather than the critic). If we are impressed by the truth of a movement in sculpture or painting, this means, not that the craftsman has *observed*

the movement (however familiar he may be with it in daily life); but that at the time of the conception and execution of his work, he has *felt* the corresponding tensions in his own flesh. The 'awkwardness,' then, of primitive art, is that of undeveloped consciousness (self-awareness), progress, the evidence of increasing consciousness, and decadence of apathy. It is in this way that a nation's art reveals the various stages of its spiritual history. Technical perfection, on the other hand, is a matter of knowledge and skill, rather than of vitality: æsthetically neither good nor bad, it need not and often does not coincide with the perfection of art.

The splendid gateways of the Sāñcī *stūpa* were erected under the patronage of Andhra kings, probably between 70 and 50 B.C. Their surfaces are covered with reliefs illustrating

historical scenes from the Buddha's life, a few Jātaka stories, and with representations of guardian *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs* (some in relief, some in the round), animals, Buddhist symbols, and decorative designs. An exquisite terracotta plaque from Bhitā, probably from an ivory die, is identical in style with the reliefs of the Sāñcī gateways. The Sāñcī reliefs present a very detailed and animated picture of Indian life, invaluable to the student of culture, even apart from their value as art. The sculptors—technically carvers in wood and ivory, though working now in stone—are far more skilful and experienced than heretofore; that is to say, their knowledge and facility are greater, the cutting of the reliefs is deeper, the composition more sophisticated, the sense of perspective and depth much more convincing. But the spiritual quality of the art remains

unchanged. Even when the theme is altogether Buddhist, the art remains innocent, untroubled, and even sensuous, and neither intellectual nor idealistic. Mediæval Buddhist art is often the work of Buddhist monks; but early Buddhist art is the art of the people, used for the glorification of religion, telling the story of Buddhism in the clearest and simplest possible way, and never attempting the embodiment of spiritual ideals in terms of form. When the theme is less precisely Buddhist—as in the representations of *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs* at Bārhut and Sāñcī, and on the railing pillars of the Jain *stūpa* at Mathurā (also of the first century B.C.)—the inherent sensuousness, and even sensuality, of the art becomes more obvious still: an interpretation of spiritual love as a manifestation or symbol, and of the whole physical world as a theophany, belongs to a much later

phase of thought, and we cannot be surprised that Buddhist monks were warned to turn away their eyes from 'conversation' pictures, which must have been love scenes of the sort we find amongst the paintings of Ajaṇṭā and in later Hindu sculpture. Only in the devoted gesture of worshipping figures kneeling before the *bodhi*-trees or empty thrones is there any trace of spiritual passion.

No Buddha image appears in early Buddhist art; and even in the historical scenes, the Buddha's presence is indicated, not by a human representation, but by the formal symbols already mentioned, together with a few others, particularly the footprints (*pādukā*) or umbrella (*chattra*). In the Bārhut 'Descent from the Tuṣita heaven,' for example, we see only the threefold ladder, with one footprint at the top, another at the bottom. In the

elaborate scene of the 'Going Forth' at Sāñcī, Siddhārtha's presence is indicated, at five successive stages of the outward journey, only by the honorific parasol borne beside the riderless horse; remaining in the forest, his presence is indicated by footprints; attaining Enlightenment, by the railed Tree of Wisdom. The Nativity is illustrated by the lotus, bull or elephant, and in another way (also at Bārhut) by the seated figure of Māyā Devī, with the two elephants pouring water from inverted jars—a picture of the bathing of the new-born child, in which the child is not seen. On the other hand, in Jātaka representations, the sculptors are perfectly well able, and do not hesitate, to represent the Bodhisattva in human shape where the story requires it. The explanation of the absence of the human Buddha figure from the historical scenes appears to

lie, not in any inability to represent the Master in an appropriate manner, but in the existence of an already familiar method of indicating the Great Events of the Buddha's life by means of symbols. The sculptors of Bārhut and Sāñcī had large spaces to cover: they fill their story by the method of continuous narration (the representation of successive scenes in which the same actors appear again and again), with abundant detail and perfect logic—but only, as it were, by filling in the spaces between the already well-known symbols. And as regards the separate image, it is evident that the apotheosis of the Buddha had not yet, at least in orthodox circles, proceeded so far as to necessitate the use of an icon.

SECTION THE FIFTH

DEVELOPMENT OF DEVOTIONAL THEISM

THE DEVELOPMENT WHICH WE HAVE SO far followed in Buddhism and Buddhist art is a special phase of the contemporary evolution of Indian thought and religion as a whole. The apparent predominance of Buddhist art is mainly due to special circumstances of patronage and consequent abundant production in certain centres, and not to any real submergence of the Brāhmaṇical tradition. To take a concrete case, which really covers the whole ground (' since what is not to be found in the *Mahābhārata* is not to be found in India'), the development of the Epics must have been continuous from the days of their existence in ballad form (1000 to 500 B.C.) to that of their final recension about the fourth century A.D.

The first expansion of the *Mahābhārata*, for example, in which Ṣiva and Viṣṇu, side by side with Brahmâ, are already regarded as the supreme gods, Hindu temples as well as Buddhist stūpas are mentioned and the *Bhagavad-Gītā* appears, belongs to the three centuries between the Mauryan and Kuṣân periods: the final stage, with its complete statement of Hindu *dharma* and social organization, belongs to the Kuṣān and early Gupta periods. In the same way the law books, particularly Manu, and the technical literature, such as the *Bhā-rataya Nāṭya Sāstra*, imply development long preceding the final recensions. And in just the same way the appearance of Hindu sculpture and architecture in the Kuṣān and early Gupta period, even in the absence of all other evidence, would prove a lengthy previous development. The sum of Indian culture in the

Gupta period, already essentially Hindu rather than Buddhist, is so rich, so fully organised, and so conscious, that we can hardly fail to regard the preceding half millennium as the period of highest creative activity in the whole development of Hindu civilisation—an activity to be regarded as the formal and material embodiment of the Great Enlightenment.

We observe, meanwhile, the gradual emergence of Ṣiva and Viṣṇu as the supreme powers, followed by the recognition of aboriginal and local deities, including the goddesses, as aspects of one Overlord (Iṣvara), the ultimate object of all devotion. In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* we find, in the words of Krishna: 'Abandoning all duties, come unto Me'; and of devotees who worship other gods, says Krishna, 'they also worship Me.' The fundamental characteristic of the embodiment,

determination or interpretation of the spiritual impulse, is, in fact, to be recognized in the rise of the theistic cults, with their doctrine and practice of devotion (*bhakti*), and here lay the immediate necessity determining the development of a religious art.

This is not the place in which to trace in any detail the beginnings of the theistic cults. It need only be remarked that in the time of the Buddha the most honoured name is that of Brahmā, and in Buddhist literature the Brāhmaṇical pantheon is represented almost exclusively by Brahmā and Indra, while the latter appears no less frequently in Jaina literature and art. Brahmā and Indra are the only deities represented in the Græco-Buddhist art of Gandhāra, and the forms of certain of the Bodhisattvas appear to be derived from these Indian prototypes. Neither

of these gods is the object of any widespread cult in later times: there we find only the great gods Śiva and Viṣṇu, and the goddess Devī, in their innumerable forms and manifestations. Sūrya is the only one of the old Vedic deities who remains an exalted power, with an extended cult and iconography.

The germs of almost all later forms of Hindu thought are to be traced in the Upaniṣads, which have been interpreted by each school in its own way; and, just as the process of formulation and definition of Hindu systems was going on side by side with the doctrinal development and sectarian subdivision of Buddhism, so is it clear that Hindu art was developing under similar conditions. Monuments were erected in honour of particular deities; an example of this is afforded by the inscribed pillar at Besnagar erected by

Heliodora in the second century B.C., where Vasudeva is described as the God of Gods. It is evident that the religion of the Bhāgavatas was by this time fully established: but that, just as in Buddhism, the deities were first represented by symbols (here the Garuḍadhvaja) rather than by images. We gather, however, from Patañjali, commentator on Pānini in the second century B.C., that images of Ṣiva, Skanda and Viṣākha were already exhibited and sold. We have already spoken of the early Vedic reference to linga worshippers; and we may well suppose that phallic symbols, particularly the erect pillar, were made use of as cult objects at an early date. The liṅgam was now adopted into orthodox faith and has remained to this day the general *avyakta* symbol of Ṣiva. The stone liṅgam discovered by the late T. A. Gopinatha Rao at Guḍimallam, a five foot

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5. Indra: Bhājā

6. Kuvera: Bārhut

7. Siva lingam: Gudimallam

EARLY ĀNDHRA

monolith consisting of the liṅgam proper and an anthropomorphic image, is not only the earliest known (first or second century B.C.) image of a Hindu deity and thus of the highest historical interest, but a sculpture of amazing force and extraordinary technical accomplishment (Fig. 7). The figure of the deity stands upright in high relief against the under side of the erect phallus, his feet supported by a crouching *yakṣa* or *rākṣasa* ; he wears a thin muslin *dhotī* clearly revealing the form beneath, and heavy jewels, including earrings, necklace, bracelets, and anklets. There is no sacred thread. The hair is inter-braided with strands of flowers, and wound about the head like a turban. The eyes slant rather upwards, and the cheek bones are high—a Dravidian rather than an Āryan type. The material is a reddish igneous rock, the surface highly polished. The deity is

two-armed, holding in one hand a ram, in the other a water-pot and an axe (*paraṣu*), whence the liṅgam is known as the Paraṣurāmeṣvara liṅgam. It will be seen at once that this is a work in the immediate tradition of older Indian art, pre-Mauryan and Bārhut: the drapery recalls that of the figure of Kuṇika Ajātaṣatru (Fig. I), the yakṣa *vāhamam* is almost identical with the yakṣa of the Bārhut Kuvera pediment (Fig. 6). The head-dress and jewellery too are reminiscent of Bārhut. But this is a more fully developed art; there is greater muscular tension and consequently a more evident activity, while the facial expression latent in early sculpture is now intentional.

An early *mukhaliṅgam* from Bhīṭā, now in the Lucknow Museum, bears an inscription in characters assignable to the first century B.C. The top of the pillar is shaped as the head and

shoulders of a male, holding a vase in his left hand, while the right is raised in *abhaya hasta*. Below this bust are represented on the shaft of the liṅgam four heads in low relief.

The sense of devotion to a personal god is a general tendency, by no means exclusively Hindu, but affecting equally the forms of Buddhist belief, and to a less extent the Jain. A veritable transformation of Buddhism had been taking place in the Mauryan, Ṣuṅga and early Āndhra periods. Whereas in primitive Buddhism the Buddha was a man who had attained enlightenment and who after death was no longer subject to the conditions of existence, he came to be regarded in the Mahāyāna as the embodiment or incarnation of a principle. He comes, in fact, to be regarded as a god, and with what passionate

devotion he is adored may be judged from the worshipping figures of the Amarāvatī reliefs. Not only is the Buddha thus deified, but a pantheon of Buddhist deities arises, over and above the already well known Buddhist forms of the Hindu Brahmā and Indra, and the Yakṣas and Nāgas who are admitted to the cult of Buddhism at an early period as protectors and assistants. These new Buddhist gods include the previous human Buddhas, the Dhyāni Buddhas of the Four Quarters (later so prominent in Chinese Buddhism), their spiritual sons, the Bodhisattvas (of whom Maitreya alone was known to the Hīnayāna), and ultimately the feminine divinities (Tārās) associated with the latter and as saviouresses ranking with them. Additional to these are the many deified spells and mantrams; and the deities already mentioned are multiplied indefinitely by the recognition

of an infinite variety of forms, peaceful and militant.

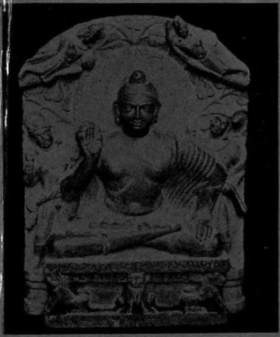
Thus we are prepared for the development of the succeeding centuries, when Indian genius, impelled by the necessity of service of the devotional cults, created an iconography adequate to the portrayal of all those spiritual and physical powers and forces which are deified in the Hindu and Buddhist pantheons.

SECTION THE SIXTH

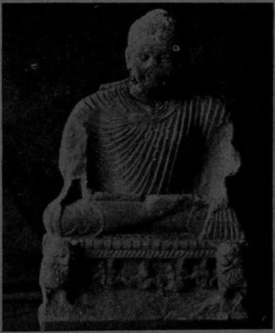
KUṢAṆ AND LATER ANDHRA PERIOD[1]

BEFORE DESCRIBING THE ACTUAL ART OF the Kuṣāṇ and later Āndhra periods in India proper, we must consider the great production of Buddhist sculpture associated with the monuments and monasteries of Taxila, and of the Gandhāra provinces of the North-West Frontier. These sculptures date for the most part between A.D. 50 and 300; in even the earliest the type is already fixed. The themes without exception are Indian Buddhist. The Buddha figure occurs abundantly both as the central figure of historical compositions and in separate seated and standing images: the ancient symbolic formulæ are very rarely seen. Forms and composition of Western (provincial Hellenistic) origin are everywhere conspicuous in

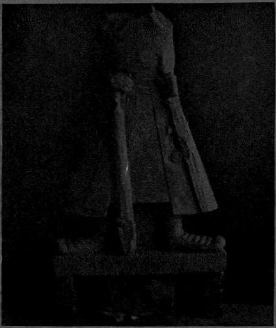
[1] For literature referring to Section Six see Appendix.



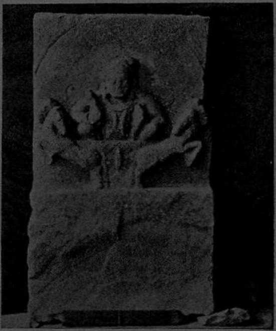
8. Bodhisattva: Mathurā



9. Buddha: Mathurā



10. Kanishka: Mathurā



11. Sūrya: Mathurā

KUSHĀN

Gandhāra art, side by side with other elements of Indian origin. The quality of the art is effeminate and sensual, its intention realistic. It appears to be the work of craftsmen of foreign origin or descent, familiar with late Greek models, adapting their stock motifs to the requirements of Buddhist patrons, the Indo-Scythian and Kuṣāṇ kings of the North-West: there is nothing to suggest that Indian artists from the plains had any part in it. On the contrary, Gandhāra art exerted a considerable influence on the contemporary school at Mathurā, and to a less degree elsewhere in India proper, even extending to the South. But we must not misunderstand the nature of this influence. The genius of Hellenistic art is foreign to Indian psychology. Western art at all times tends to representation, Indian to symbolism: the influence of

Gandhāra, hardly recognizable after A.D. 300, constitutes an episode, and not a stage in a continuous development.

We must pause, however, to consider at greater length the origin of the Buddha image. It has been argued from the Gandhāra Buddhas of the Apollo type that the Buddha image is of Greek origin and first came into being at Gandhāra. There do not exist either in Gandhāra or in India proper, Buddha images known to be earlier than the first century A.D. In both areas they appear simultaneously, in Hellenistic types at Gandhāra, and in the tradition of ancient Indian art at Mathurā. It is agreed that the earliest Gandhāra figures are 'already stereotyped' and that Buddha figures must have been made as early as the first century B.C. Were then these prototypes of Hellenistic or of Indian

origin? We shall tabulate the arguments for either view and leave the question undecided.

For the Greek origin:

(1) It is admitted that Buddhist figures in Gandhāra are adaptations of Western types. A certain amount of originality, or rather novelty, is proved by the occurrence of such types as those of the realistic emaciated Buddhas, which have no part even in later Indian Buddhist art. Early Indian religious art, on the other hand, makes use of primal symbols without anthropomorphic icons.

(2) The admitted fact that formulæ of Hellenistic art are adopted to a greater or less extent in India proper, and can be recognized in Indian art for several centuries. Moreover, such phenomena are not altogether new: Western (Iranian rather than Greek) motifs are already to be recognized in Early Buddhist art, and are conspicuous in the court art of Aṣoka, and in decorative motifs.

(3) As no Indian Buddha figure older than the Gandhāra sculptures is certainly known, it is at least possible that the first Buddha images were made in Gandhāra, and formed the models of later Indian Buddhist art. (The apocryphal legends in Buddhist literature cannot be accepted as evidence that images

of the Buddha were made already in the fifth century B.C.)

For the Indian origin:

(1) The purely Indian attitudes of the Gandhāra figures, the use of the lotus seat, often awkwardly represented, the characteristically realistic transformation of the *uṣṇīsa* (which appears already in Indian art at Bodh Gayā) would seem to imply the existence of purely Indian prototypes.

(2) Bodhisattva and Buddha figures of the first century A.D. do actually occur at Mathurā, in a style quite distinct from that of Gandhāra, and plainly developed from earlier Indian art, also, a little later, at Mirpur Khās in Sind.

(3) Negative evidence holds good as much in one sense as the other, particularly in a period of still uncertain chronology.

(4) The *yogī* seated beneath a tree, in *padmāsana*, 'gazing upon the end of his nose,' in profound meditation, was then, as now, a familiar spectacle. Once the need of an image had been felt (and we have recognized the sources of such a need in the general development of Indian religious experience), the choice of the meditating or teaching *yogī* figure must have been inevitable. What other form *could*

have been appropriately set beneath the *bodhi* tree, which had hitherto stood alone as the sign of the Great Enlightenment? It is certain that no Western prototype of a seated figure with crossed legs and hands in *dhyāna* or *bhūmi-sparṣa mudrā* can be cited or imagined.

(5) Regarded simply as works of art, there is no suggestion of primitive inspiration in Gandhāra sculpture. In other cycles of art, creative energy finds immediate expression in powerful and simple forms. Are we to consider Gandhāra a case unique in the history of art?

It will be seen from these considerations that it may be regarded both as *a priori* likely and as historically possible, that the Buddha image wherever found is based on Indian prototypes: just as the images of Bodhisattvas and those of Hindu deities are derived in direct descent from Indian sources.

The most important remains of Buddhist sculpture of the Kuṣāṇ period are those of Mathurā, Amarāvatī and Ceylon. The former,

now for the most part in the Mathurā Museum, include the oldest Buddha figure so designated in an inscription. As this seated Buddha, from Aṇyor, is headless, we have reproduced (Fig. 8) the inscribed Katrā Bodhisattva, the pose and general appearance of which are identical with those of the Aṇyor Buddha. It will be observed that the right hand is raised in *abhaya mudrā*, the left hand rests on the thigh, the elbow being raised : this position of the left arm scarcely recurs in Indian art, but survives or reäppears in a characteristic seated pose of Javanese actors. Another Buddha, of the same school and period, the robe in this case covering both shoulders, is shown in (Fig. 9.) It will be remarked that these images are far more energetic than those of the Gandhāra school, and belong to the old tradition of Bārhut and pre-Mauryan sculpture.

Very remarkable are the Bacchanalian groups of Mathurā, perhaps representing Kuvera, and in any case connected with Yakṣa cults absorbed into popular Buddhism. Figures of Yakṣas and Nāgas, both in the round and as reliefs on railing pillars, are commonly found. The Nāga cult seems to have flourished at Mathurā, and it is noteworthy that the later images of Balarâma are identical with and no doubt derived from these Nāga types.

Mathurá has also yielded a number of inscribed funerary (?) statues of Kuṣāṇ kings (Kaṇiṣka, Fig. 10:) these show no signs of Hellenistic influences, though the costume, like that of the Kuṣān kings on the coins, a coat with long skirts, and high boots, is rather central Asian (Yueh Chi) than Indian.

Buddhist sculptures of the Mathurā school have been found at Sārnāth and Saheṭh

Maheṭh (Ṣrāvasti), the latter a part of a Bodhisattva figure, with an inscription, probably older than the Aṇyor Buddha, and before Kaṇiṣka. The standing Bodhisattva in the Calcutta Museum is a massive and realistic figure of the old Indian type. The Buddhist sculpture of Peshawar and Taxila in the time of Kaṇiṣka, in the inscribed 'Kaṇiṣka casket' with seated Buddha figures, is altogether in the Græco-Buddhist or Indo-Hellenistic style of the North-West. We have not described these works in detail, as they fall without the the central tradition and direct evolution of Indian art.

A Jain stūpa has been excavated at Mathurā, and has yielded many railing pillars decorated with nude Yakṣīs associated with trees, the woman and tree motif which recurs so constantly in Indian art from the Bārhut period

onwards. A 'tablet of homage' with a relief of a Jain stūpa shows that the Jain monuments were identical in form with the Buddhist.

Coins of the period are interesting, both for their improved technique and for the variety of subjects represented. Two-armed figures of Ṣiva have already appeared on the coins of the Parthian Gondophares and the Great Yueh Chi; those of Kaṇiṣka show the deity sometimes with two, sometimes with four arms. The Kaṇiṣka coins bear representations of a varied assemblage of Zoroastrian, Greek, Mithraic and Indian deities: Buddha is represented standing in a costume of Greek aspect, and seated in Indian fashion. Remains of Hindu sculptures of the Mathurā school will no doubt be recognized when the sculptures are studied in greater

detail from this point of view. A three-headed Kuṣān sculpture, for example, in the Mathurā Museum still awaits identification. The oldest known Brāhmaṇical temple, of the first century B.C. or A.D. and adorned with Ṣaiva reliefs, exists at Ramnagar in the Bareli district. The oldest Sanskrit inscription occurs on the sacrificial posts of Isapur.

Contemporary with the Kuṣān sculpture of Northern India is the Buddhist art of the later Andhra dynasty of the Deccan, best known by the remains of the magnificent stūpa of Amarāvatī. The original *caitya* dates from about 200 B.C., and some reliefs are of the first or second century B.C.: the casing slabs and the great railing, and also the few Buddha figures, date from the latter part of the second century A.D., or at any rate not later than A.D. 250. The railing is the most elaborate

known of its kind; about six hundred feet in circumference, it stood some thirteen or fourteen feet above the pavement level. As usual, it consisted of pillars connected by crossbars, standing on a plinth. Each upright was decorated with full and half lotus rosettes, infinitely varied in treatment, and with reliefs in the intervening spaces. Each crossbar bore another full lotus rosette on each side. The coping and plinth were elaborately ornamented, the former with a long undulating garland carried by men, the latter with boys and animals. The casing slabs for the most part represent scenes from the life of Buddha treated in accordance with the old tradition in which the Buddha figure is omitted. It is estimated that a total surface of nearly seventeen thousand square feet was covered with sculptured reliefs: it is very

possible that these were originally covered with a thin coat of fine plaster, and painted.

The sculpture is very vigorous and full of movement, sometimes passionately devotional (Fig. 12), sometimes humorous, always voluptuous and decorative. The whole is a masterpiece of pure design, charming in every detail.

On the other hand, the Buddha figure is still intensely ascetic and severe, representing pure thought rather than design ; sculpture in the round is not yet perfectly absorbed by or attuned to the rhythm of the social order, but has a slower tempo and more restricted scope. The Amarāvatī and Sinhalese Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the second and third century A.D. are unsurpassed as pure sculpture ; but it is only in the Gupta period that sculpture in the round, the cult figure, is perfectly

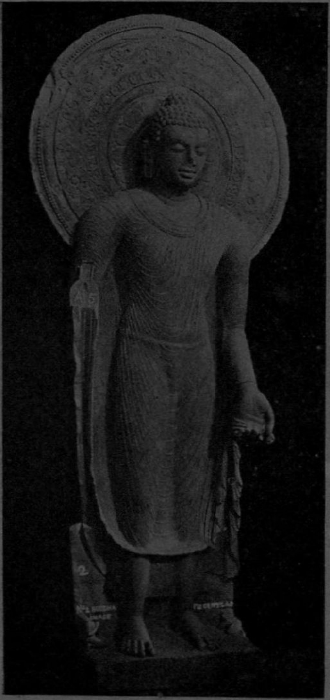
assimilated to the ensemble of the architecture and reliefs, and shares their decorative qualities. We may put it that before the third century each image is an individual achievement, and iconography is not yet rigidly defined. It is only in the first century A.D. that deities are represented with four arms, and many-headed and many-armed forms are still later: about the second or third century the old Buddhist representation of the Nativity (Māyā Devī with the elephants) is being taken over into Hindu (Paurāṇic) iconography as Gaja Lakṣmī, while the development of Gaṇeṣa from Jambhala (the mongoose of the latter becoming the rat of the former) may be still later. The compilation of the earlier *Silpa Sāstras* may be dated in a general way as late Kuṣān or early Gupta, the *dhyana mantrams* of personal worship becoming the *sādhanās* of

the imagers' handbooks: thereafter, image-making becomes a craft inseparable from architecture and all other crafts.

The earliest of the innumerable references to painting in Indian literature, occurring in the Epics and early Buddhist texts, bespeak a highly developed art: paintings on cloth, on wooden panels, and on walls, and the painted halls of royal palaces are mentioned. To Buddhist monks the representation of the human figure was forbidden, and only that of wreaths and creepers permitted. How soon this rule was neglected may be seen not only from the literature, but also in the paintings of cave temples Nos. IX and X at Ajaṇṭā, ranging from 100 B.C. to A.D. 200. Here there are representations of Jātaka scenes, and of seated and standing Buddhas. The fine example of a standing King or Yakṣa reproduced

by Professor S. Taki in the 'Kokka' No. 355, closely parallels the sculptures of Bārhut and Sāñcī, and the early work of the Mathurā school. Like the sculpture, the painting is static and enormously dignified, rather than elegant or facile. Technically it is far advanced, the face and figure being shown in three-quarter profile with thorough understanding of the problems involved; the draughtsmanship is able and unhesitating, but quite without the bravura and the sweetness of Ajaṇṭā painting of the Gupṭa period. The Buddha figures in the same caves are not likely to be earlier than the second century A.D. The poorly preserved and much restored frescoes of the Jogīmārā cave in the Rāmgarh hill (Orissa) are probably of the first century B.C., possibly somewhat earlier: seated and standing figures and caitya halls, and decorative work with *makaras* and

other marine monsters are represented, but the whole is too badly effaced to admit of exact identification.



16. Buddha: Mathurā

17. Krishna: Mandor

GUPTA

SECTION THE SEVENTH

THE GUPTA PERIOD[1]

THE GUPTA PERIOD IS THE GOLDEN AGE OF India, the age of maturity when Bharatavarṣa attained the fruit of her birth. Political power and abundant wealth inevitably provide the physical medium for that unique mastery of life which marks the culmination of Indian civilization. The combination or brilliant intellectual and spiritual development with the utmost sensuousness of experience and expression more than justify the Indian tradition of the court of Vikramāditya. Close relations with the West by way of Bactria in the North and the Roman trade in the South have now been broken : India's foreign relations are now, and for a thousand years to follow, with the Far East by way of Central Asia, and with

[1] For literature relating to Section Seven see Appendix.

Further India and Indonesia by sea. It is under Indian influence that the Unity of Asia (a unity to which the later culture of Islam is foreign) came into being.

India herself is now for the first time spiritually and intellectually one, the normal rhythm of life is established in and by the Epics, and a fundamental unity of experience and character transcends all political, racial, linguistic and sectarian distinctions. Vedic ritualism, a survival from a remote past, and primitive Buddhism, correctly interpreted by mediæval Hindu thought as a kind of heresy or treason against the social order, are no longer state religions: Vaiṣṇavism, Ṣaivism, Ṣāktism and Mahāyāna Buddhism, the religions of devotion to Viṣṇu, Ṣiva, Devī, Buddha or Bodhisattva, are patronised impartially. Images and temples appropriate to each of these persuasions of

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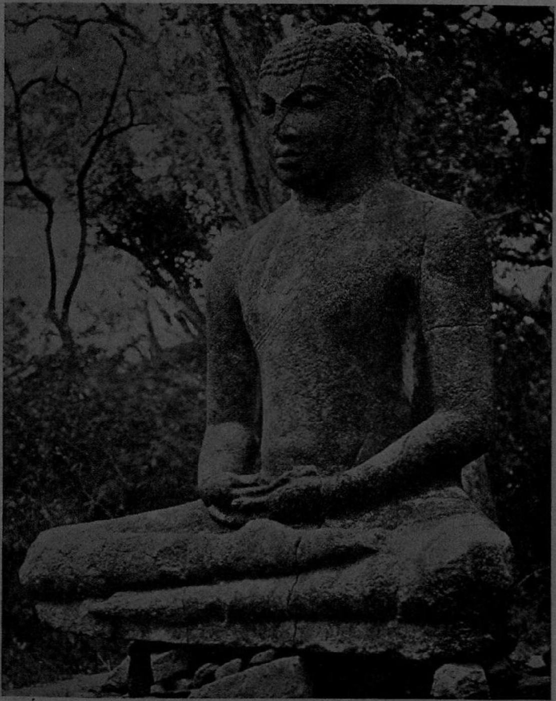

15. Buddha: Anurādhapura (Ceylon)

LATE ĀNDHRA

Hinduism appear in profusion, and determine the leading forms of all later imagery and architecture. Iconography and the theory of music and dancing are codified. In the art of the Gupta period all earlier tendencies converge: an identical quality appears not only in art of diverse sectarian application, but in the art of every province, from the Himālayas to Ceylon. We no longer meet with primitive qualities or *naïveté* in Indian art—its character is self-possessed, urbane, at once exuberant and formal. All foreign influences have been absorbed and Indianised. There is no divergence of feeling between doctrine and expression—it has come to be understood that the forms and experiences of finite life are revelations of the infinite: in this age, we can truly say that the five senses are the chief inlets of soul. Philosophy and faith possess a common

language in this art that is at once abstract and sensuous, reserved and passionate.

Buddhism is now completely fused with the national life; the Buddha figure, still extraneous at Amarāvatī, has become an integral part of the architecture. The paintings of Ajaṇṭā reflect the same abundant, exquisite, sophisticated and brilliant life that forms the theme of Bāṇas Kādambarī. This was an age which could afford to permit to itself the fullest possible enjoyment of life, by right of innate virtue. In this connection it is worth while to remark that now for the first and only time in Indian history we meet with a practice of the arts as a personal achievement, side by side with the vocational and hieratic production. Individual men of letters,—the 'nine gems of Vikramāditya's court'—who are not by immediate profession religious teachers,

attain to fame; painting is an accomplishment of kings and queens (portrait painting is a common device of the classical drama); and there are indications here, and in the erotic literature, that secular painting was regarded, like music and poetry, as a source of the experience of *rasa*.[1] Samudragupta's musical skill is commemorated in the gold

[1] The *Uttara Rāma Carita* of Bhavabhūti, I, 39, speaks of the queen receiving a latent impression (*bhāvanā*) by looking at the pictures. Vatsyāyana's *Kāma Sūtra*, a compilation of older material, perhaps made in the early Gupta period, mentions painting as one of the sixty-four arts belonging to an elegant education. Yaṣodhara's later commentary enumerates the Six Limbs (*Ṣad-aṅga*) of painting as follows:

Rūpa-bheda, distinction of forms (*i.e.*, knowledge of the *lakṣaṇas* of persons to be represented).

Pramānam, proportion (*i.e.*, knowledge of the canons of proportion, *tālamāna*).

Bhāva, mood, technically the rise of emotion in a mind previously at rest, here the corresponding quality in a work of art.

coins where he is represented as playing the vīṇā. The great excellence of the Gupta coinage must be attributed to the cultivated taste of the kings. But these personal achievements should scarcely be regarded, like those of a modern genius, as aberrations from life or the exploitation of a personality: they are the ornaments and pinnacles of the structure of the race, perfectly in harmony with all its architecture.

Earlier Indian art is, so to speak, a product of nature, rather than of artifice, and

Lāvaṇya-yojanam, infusion of saltness (lāvaṇya, in a human being means beauty, charm, grace, allure, here the like quality in painting).

Sādriṣya, likeness (perhaps with reference to portraiture).

Varṇika-bhaṅga, distribution of pigments (*i.e.*, knowledge of the colours proper to each subject).

Yaṣodhara adds, 'These arts avail to awaken passion in others and for pastime.'

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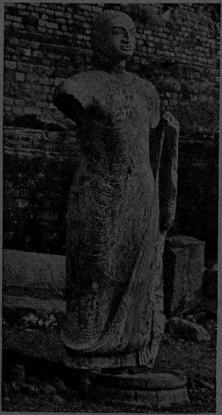
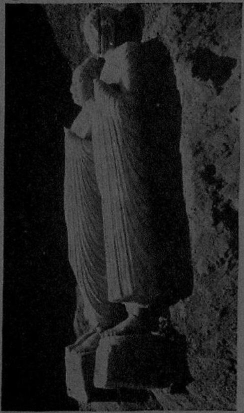
12. Worshippers: Amarāvatī

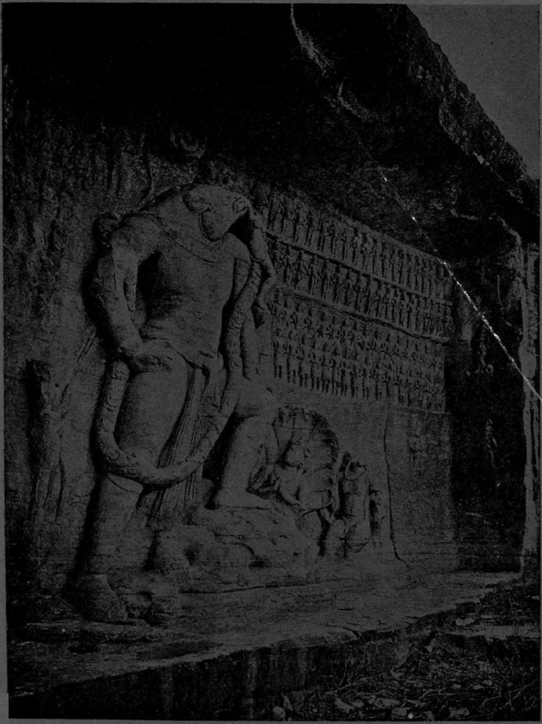


13. Buddha: Ceylon



14. Buddhas: Amarāvatī

LATE ĀNDHRA



18. Varāha Avatār: Udayagiri, Bhopāl

GUPTA

characterised by naturalism and simplicity. Gupta art is the flower of an established tradition, a polished and perfected medium, like the Sanskrit language, for the statement of thought and feeling: and having thus become an ordered language with a grammar and vocabulary of its own, its forms are by hypothesis conventioned ('agreed upon') and ideal—its truth of utterance does not depend upon, though it may include, a visual resemblance to natural forms.

We shall now refer to the most important surviving monuments of the period. At Bhītargāon there exists an ancient brick temple, square in plan with a high tower, probably of the sixth century; it is decorated with carved brickwork and brilliant terracotta panels of Ṣaiva themes. There are cave temples at Udayagiri near Besnagar in Bhopāl, one of

which bears an inscription dated equivalent to A.D. 401. Here the principal sculptures are the great relief façade representing the Raising of Earth from the waters by Viṣṇu as Varāha, a Paurāṇic subject, and the representation of river goddesses, common in Gupta art, in the Candragupta cave. A large relief at Paṭhārī, also in Bhopāl, represents the nativity of Kṛṣṇa. The temple of Deogaṛh, Jhānsi District, (sixth century) has relief panels of Vaiṣṇava subjects, including the Birth of Brahmā, and the salvation of the King of Elephants, a theme that recurs much later in Rajput painting. Fragmentary sculptures of the fourth century at Maṇḍor near Jodhpur show scenes from the Kṛṣṇa *enfances*, including the raising of Mt. Govardhana. The Calcutta Museum has a fine Ṣiva and Pārvatī group from Kosām near Allahābād, dated equivalent to A.D. 458-9.

20. Siva and Pārvatī: Elūrā

21. Vishnu: Māmallapuram

There is a three-headed Viṣṇu of the fifth or sixth century in the Boston Museum, and a four-headed copper or bronze image of Brahmā, of early Gupta date, from Mīrpur Khās, in the Museum at Karāchi.

The Dancing Ṣiva type appears in the decoration of the Durgā temple at Aihole. This temple, of fifth century date, is remarkable for its apsidal plan; it is like a structural Buddhist church, with a Hindu shrine in place of the *stūpa.* Two old Buddhist churches, with apsidal plan and barrel roof respectively at Ter (the ancient Tagara, in Haidarābād) and Chezarla (Kistna district) have been converted to Vaiṣṇava and Ṣaiva uses and so preserved. A series of ancient temples at Aihole, Lāḍ Khān and Durgā temples, fifth century, Meguti and Huccimalli Guḍi temples, sixth century, and others of the same period with fine

Vaiṣṇava reliefs as ceiling panels are closely related to the excavated architectural forms of the neighbouring Bādāmī caves. The latter include Cave I, a Ṣaiva temple with a Taṇḍava sculptured relief, Caves II and III which are Vaiṣṇava temples, and a Jaina cave, No. IV, with relief sculptures of the Jinas; the first three of the sixth century, the latter of the seventh. Caves XVI, XVII and XIX at Ajaṇṭā date from the close of the fifth century, Cave XXVI from about A.D. 600. Cave XIX has a very richly sculptured façade, with many Buddha figures. Related to this is the Viṣvakarmā Buddhist cave at Elūrā, of the sixth or early seventh century, where, as at Ajaṇṭā, the front of the *stūpa* is occupied by an immense Buddha, in this case seated, with two attendants. At Sārnāth, the Dhāmekh *stūpa* and a richly carved lintel with Jātaka

subjects illustrate the wealth of architectural remains, while the site has also yielded many well-preserved Buddha figures. The Buddhist temple at Buddha Gayā, founded by Aṣoka, dates in the main from the sixth century, with restorations up to the twelfth, and modern restorations. A Boḍhisattva torso from Sāñcī in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, is amongst the finest surviving examples of late Kuṣāṇ or early Gupta art. The great standing Buddha (fig. 16) at Mathurā (fifth century) is even more impressive: the beautifully decorated *ṣiraṣcakra* is typical of the Gupta style, and contrasts with the plainer types of the Kuṣāṇ period. Many fine Buddhist bronzes have been found at Buddhapāḍ in the Bezwāda district: a seated Buddha of similar character from Badullā is now in the Colombo Museum, and a standing

image, said to have been found in Burma, is now in the Boston Museum. The finest of the stone sculptures of Anurādhapura already referred to (figs. 13 and 15) are probably of late Kuṣāṇ, and many others are of early Gupta age. Of other Buddhist sculptures the most important are the Buddha and Bodhisattva figures from Mathurā (standing Buddha, fig. 16), Sāñcī, and Sārnāth (amongst others the well-known torso in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London); the colossal copper statue of Buddha from Sultānganj, now in the Birmingham Museum, dating about A.D. 400 and weighing over a ton; the seated Buddha of Mānkuwār, dated equivalent to A.D. 446-8, with webbed hands; and the Kaṅgṛā brass Buddha of the sixth century, inlaid with silver and copper, now in the Lahore Museum. Remains of the Gupta period will no doubt be found

at Nālandā as the excavation proceeds. The seals and gold coins of the Guptas are masterpieces of design, the coins superior to those of any other phase of Indian art. There is a small gold standing image of Buddha, of the Gupta age, in the British Museum. We must not omit a reference to the well-known Iron Pillar of Delhi, erected about A.D. 415 by Kumāragupta I.

The frescoes of Ajaṇṭā preserve an infinitely precious record of the golden age of Indian painting. The greater part, excepting those in Caves IX and X already referred to, are to be dated between A.D. 550 and 642, those in Cave I being latest, and contemporaneous with the related paintings at Bāgh in Mālwā. This is the picture of a halcyon age, where renunciation and enjoyment are prefectly attuned, an art at once of utmost intimacy and reserve. Every

gesture springs in godlike fashion directly from the natural dispositions of the mind: this is not the self-betrayal of innocence, but utterance in terms of a supreme courtesy—the language of gesture had already its lexicons, the analysis of feeling had been made in learned treatises. All this is comparable only with the virtue still to be recognized in Indian and Indonesian dancing and music, where learned form is the natural medium of expression of the deepest feeling. It is of no importance that we know nothing of the painters' names: all India was richly painted in these days, and the art is the art of a race, and not of any individual. The subjects treated by Ajaṇṭā painters are those characteristic of Buddhist art at all times—scenes from the life of Buddha, and Jātakas. The following are amongst the most important compositions:

Cave I: Māra Dharṣaṇa, Great Bodhisattva (Plate IX), 'Indra and Sācī,' ceiling with love scenes, and 'Persian Embassy' (really a Bacchanalian Pāñcika).

Cave II: Great Miracle at Śrāvastī, Kṣāntivādin Jātaka, Indraloka scenes, decorated ceiling.

Cave XVI: Buddha triad, Great Renunciation, Dying Princess. A fragment from this cave is in the Boston Museum.

Cave XVII: Seven Buddhas, Wheel of Causation, Mahāhaṁsa, Matṛpoṣaka, Ṣaddanta, Ṣibi (with inscription), and Viṣvantara Jātakas, Apsarases, decorated ceiling.

Contemporary with some of the Ajaṇṭā paintings are the similar (fifth century) frescoes in a rock pocket at the Sīgiriya fortress in Ceylon, representing Apsarases (the lower part of the body in each case is concealed by clouds, indicating that celestial beings are intended) in the likeness of princesses accompanied by maid-servants carrying trays of flowers. Jain paintings, evidently of great importance and beauty, have been recently discovered at

Sittanavasal near Pudukottai, and assigned by M. Jouveau-Dubreuil to the time of Mahendravarmam I (600-25).

SECTION THE EIGHTH

EARLY MEDIÆVAL[1]

THE PERIOD FOLLOWING THE GUPTA AND covering the transition from ancient to mediæval India, is one of even more abundant and elaborate production. The themes to be represented are more varied, in accordance with the full development of the mythology and cosmology, Hindu, Buddhist and Jain. A technique had now been evolved and well established, fully adequate not only to the representation of the various Paurāṇic legends but to express the multifarious concepts of a very intricate theology. The imager had at his command not only craft traditions, but formulæ (*sādhanas*, *dhyāna mantrams*, etc.) proper to all the diverse aspects and manifestations of the One Supreme Power who takes the forms imagined

[1] For literature relating to Section Eight see Appendix.

by his worshippers and appropriate to their needs.

Early mediæval sculpture has great dramatic force, and freer movement than in the Gupta period. The national taste (the broad shoulders and the lion waist of the hero, the heroine's heavy breasts, and so forth) is fully conscious and determines the character of works of which the details are ritually prescribed: there is a tendency to an increasing elegance and slenderness of form. The types of mediæval architecture seem to spring into being suddenly, because the earlier development through wooden prototypes has inevitably been lost. Everywhere, too, there must have been painted walls, external and internal, of which no trace could be preserved. Were it possible to put back the hands of the clock, and revisit ancient India, it is perhaps

to the eighth century that we should turn, choosing for our pilgrimage a moment when temple-building and sculpture were in the fullest tide of their activity, and but little of the work of former centuries had yet been destroyed. As it is, the monuments of the eighth century, particularly those of Elūrā, Elephantā and Māmallapūram, are better known to modern students than any others, and some, not without reason, have regarded this period as representing the zenith of Indian art.

At Elūrā the most renowned monument is the Kailāsa. This great shrine is not an interior excavation, like the earlier cave temple, but a model of a structural temple, cut from the living rock and standing free from it, though sunk, as it were, in the sloping side of the hill from which it has been

excavated. Here the type of South Indian (Dravidian) architecture, with its flat roofs, enormous curved eaves, and domed *vimāna* or *ṣikhara* is fully developed. The main temple and most of its chapels are Ṣaiva. The best known relief (Fig. 20) represents Ṣiva and Pārvatī upon Mt. Kailāsa, Rāvaṇa below attempting to shake the mass from within, Ṣiva steadying it with the pressure of his foot—a magnificent dramatisation of the forces of strain and resistance at work in the earth's crust (we must not forget that Indian mythology is as much a natural philosophy as an art). On the north wall of the excavation is a shrine devoted to the three river goddesses, with colossal reliefs of Gaṅgā, Sarasvatī and Yamunā. A powerful relief, occupying an angle of the outer wall, represents Ṣiva destroying the triple city of the Asuras: a relief

in the Laṅkeṣvara section, perhaps a century later, represents a six-armed dancing Ṣiva. Traces of painting can be seen on the roof of the main temple, which must be dated about A.D. 775. The Das Avatāra cave, on the same hill slope, may be dated about 700 : it contains some important and powerful reliefs, of which perhaps the finest represents the death of Hiraṇyakaṣipu, where Viṣṇu appears in man-lion form, emerging from a pillar to lay a fatal hand upon the shoulder of the impious king who had denied his omnipresence.

The excavated Ṣaiva temples at Elephantā, near Bombay, preserve, besides many other sculptures of great importance, the well-known colossal 'Trimūrti' (Maheṣvara-mūrti) ; a relief representing the marriage of Ṣiva and Pārvatī ; and a four-headed statue of Sadāṣiva, in the round.

In the South, the most famous monuments of Pallava art consist of excavated shrines; imitated structural temples (*rathas*) cut in the living rock and known as the Seven Pagodas; the great relief composition known as Arjuna's Penance; and the slightly later structural 'Shore Temple,' all at Māmallapuram, a little south of Madras. Structural temples (Kailāsanātha and Vaikuṇṭha Perumal) of the seventh century are to be found at Kañcipūram (Conjeevaram).

The monuments at Māmallapurām are assigned to Narasiṁhavarman I (*circa*) 625-650: those of his predecessor Mahendravarman I (600-625) are all 'caves'. The earlier excavated shrines include the two in which are found the representations of Kṛṣṇa raising Mt. Govardhana, and the great Durgā-Mahiṣāsura and Viṣṇu-Anantaṣayin compositions,

19. Bodhisattva: Ajantā
GUPTA

the latter illustrated in Figure 21; the later group consists of the seven pseudo-structural temples ('Seven Pagodas'), in a pure Dravidian style, some preserving the design of ancient Buddhist Vihāras, and one with a curved roof preserving the form of bamboo architecture as it may still be seen in Eastern India. The structural 'Shore Temple' belongs to the time of Rājasiṁhavarman, or is at any rate not later than the ninth century.

In Orissa, mainly at Bhuvaneṣvara, Pūri and Konārak, the continuous development of the northern style of architecture with sloping-sided *ṣikhara* crowned by an *amalaka*, may be followed from the flat or nearly flat-roofed Parasurāmeṣvara temple of the seventh or eighth century onwards. Similar to the Paraṣurāmeṣvara temple is the great Pāpanātha

temple at Paṭṭakadal, and a little earlier is the Hucchimalligudi temple at Aihole in the west.

In the north, in the Kāngṛā and Kulu valleys respectively, are found the rock-cut temples of Masrūr, and the structural temples of Baijnāth and Bajaurā.

The famous and picturesque Sun temple at Mārtānd in Kāshmīr, with its pointed arches, belongs to the very different local Kāshmīr school (A. D. 600-1100), and preserves a Western (classical) appearance.

Isolated sculptures of early mediæval date are comparatively few or little known. The school of Mathurā seems to have produced nothing after the sixth century. Of the Buddhist remains at Nālandā, Sārnāth, and other Magadha and Orissan sites, some must be older than A.D. 900, but little has been done towards their accurate classification.

Buddhist bronzes from Ceylon (the well-known Avalokiteṣvara and Jambhala in the Boston Museum) are undoubtedly of the eighth century, and in the style of the Elūrā reliefs. The best illustration of the sculpture, however, is found in the reliefs at Elūrā and Elephantā, already mentioned, and in the composition called Arjuna's Penance at Māmallapūram. This covers a vertical rock surface about 96 by 43 feet in area, divided into two parts by a cleft. The key to the meaning of the composition is to be found in the shrine and *yogī* worshipper on the left of the cleft. Two interpretations have been offered. According to that implied in the popular name "Arjuna's Penance," the emaciated *yogī* is Arjuna, who thus propitiated Ṣiva in the high Himālayas, in order to obtain the boon of the use of the miraculous arms of India. Ṣiva appeared in the form of

a hunter, engaged Arjuna in combat (the *Kiratārjunīya*) and, after overcoming him, bestowed on him the weapons of Indra. According to another interpretation, the whole composition represents the Descent of Gaṅgā, in which case the *yogī* must be identified as Bhagiratha: the *nāga* figures occupying the cleft are cited in support of this suggestion; but it is hardly possible that water should ever have actually flowed from above, as the advocates of this theory have supposed. In any case, we have before us a magnificent representation of a cosmic event, acclaimed by all orders of beings, approaching the scene on either side. The effect is most impressive, and must have been more so when the reservoir below was filled with water. The representations of elephants, deer and other animals are masterpieces of sympathetic interpretation,

and with these figures must be grouped the remarkable 'Monkey Family' which occurs as an isolated sculpture, some distance to the north.

SECTION THE NINTH

MEDIÆVAL SCULPTURE[1]

850—1200

THE COURSE OF INDIAN TEMPLE BUILDING and sculpture continues uninterruptedly until the end of the twelfth century in Northern, Western and Central India, to the end of the thirteenth century in Orissa and Ceylon, and up to the present day in Southern India. The crest of the wave which rose to its highest in the Gupta period, and advanced serenely during the two succeeding centuries, is now breaking into foam. We see an increasing complication, heightened emphasis, and a superb technical accomplishment and patience that are apt to overreach their end, as, for example, in many of the Hoyṣala (Chālukya) temples of the

[1] For literature relating to Section Nine see Appendix.

Deccan, where, it may be noted, many figures are signed by the Kanarese artists, a thing practically unknown in earlier periods, when the artist's name is only mentioned when he himself is the donor. The lavish use of decorative detail, going hand in hand with an attenuation of the actual elements of design, and of the figure, take the place of the essential richness of the Gupta period: the erotic sculptures of Kanārak are not one half so voluptuous as the Gupta Buddhas, or even the reliefs at Elephantā and Māmallapuram. But it is only by reference to what is past that we can speak in this fashion; if we accept, as we should accept, the mediæval buildings and sculptures in and for themselves, and wholly in relation to their own environment, we cannot fail to recognize their charm and infinite variety, the marvellous skill which uses stone like metal,

and covers whole ceilings with wreaths of dancers (Fig. 26), or with frozen lace.

The great Liṅgarāja temple in Orissa has been called the finest example of a purely Hindu temple in India; it dates from the ninth or tenth century, with later additions. The great tower is imposing beyond words, and the sculptured detail full of beauty. The somewhat similar Jagannātha ('Juggernaut') temple at Purī, dating from the latter part of the eleventh century, has a world-wide celebrity through the annual car festival. The Black Pagoda at Kanārak, nineteen miles north-east of Purī, is assigned to the middle of the thirteenth century, and now forms one of the most magnificent ruins in India. The temple was dedicated to the Sun, and closely connected with the cults of Viṣṇu. The main temple is in the form of a

27. Natarājā: Madras
LATE MEDIÆVAL

car (*ratha* or *vimāna)* borne on immense wheels drawn by horses. Much of the sculpture may be described as a detailed illustration of the *Kāma Sāstra.* This rich external decoration reflects the life of the world and the energizing power of the Sun: within, as in the majority of Hindu temples, all is plain. Of the external decorations of the later Hindu temples generally, we may say that there is represented, offered and dedicated to the deity, all the forms of life and all the activities that constitute the universe through which he manifests, and by which he is known to us; and in such a dedication, essential to the religious life, the exclusion of any aspect of life, even on grounds of human convenience, would amount to a denial of God.

Next in interest to the Orissan temples are those of Khajurāho and Gwaliār, Jaina,

Vaiṣṇava and Ṣaiva, ranging from the tenth to the eleventh century. The Kandārya Mahādeva temple at Khajurāho is a most imposing pile : the external aspect very clearly reflects the interior construction, which rises step by step, and terminates in the immense *ṣikhara*, which is gracefully supported by smaller replicas of itself on its sloping sides. Here too there are remarkable erotic sculptures, and more beautiful than those of Kanārak. At Gwaliār the Caturbhuj temple dates from the ninth century, the Sās Bahu and Telikā Mandir temples from the tenth or eleventh. The latter has no *ṣikhara*, but has a barrel-vaulted roof with caitya windows at each end.

One of the most famous of all Indian buildings is the Ṣaiva temple at Somnāth, which was destroyed by Maḥmūd of Ghazni about 1025 and rebuilt by Kumārapala in 1168.

24. Māra darshana: Borobodur (Java)

25. Army, relief: Angkor War (Cambodia)

26. Dancers, ceiling: Mt. Ābu

MID-MEDIÆVAL

Perhaps the most remarkable mediæval temple groups of Western India, however, are those of the Jains, at Mt. Ābū, Girnār, and Palitāna. All three sites are sacred hills, where an aggregate of temples forms a city of the gods, not used by men. Those of Mt. Abū are justly famed for the delicacy and intricacy of their decorative sculpture: they are built entirely of white marble, transported from a distance of twenty or thirty miles, and carried up a hill four thousand feet in height. The most notable temples are those built by Vimala in 1031 and by Tejapāla in 1230. Tejapāla's temple is even more elaborate: a detail from a domed ceiling, a band of dancers, is reproduced in Figure 26. The Girnār site, sacred to Nemināth, is a city of temples built on the ledge of a cliff some six hundred feet below the summit of the hill, mostly erected or

restored in the fifteenth century. It will be observed, too, that at Ahmadābād and elsewhere in Gujarāt there are many beautiful mosques, built by craftsmen of the Jain tradition, and hardly differing from Jain work save in the omission of all sculptured figures.

The architecture of the Hoyṣalas has already been referred to. The style can best be seen in the Dharwār district. The Ṣaiva temple at Ittagi, the Someṣvar and Trikuteṣvara temples at Gadag, and a group of old temples at Lakkuṇdi near by, are the oldest. In Mysore proper the most remarkable temples are found at Belūr (about 1117) and Hālebīd, where temple building was stopped by the Mussalmans about 1310. The Hoysaleṣvara temple at Hālebīd is one of the most richly ornamented in all India: almost the entire field of Indian mythology is illustrated, and the decorative

motifs are superimposed in frieze upon frieze. It is incomplete, as work was stopped by the Mussalman invasion in 1311.

There scarcely exist intact remains of any of the Buddhist monasteries and temples erected at Sārnāth, Nālandā, and elsewhere in Bihār, Bengal and Orissa during the mid-mediæval period; but, on the other hand, the Buddhist and Hindu sculptures of the Pāla dynasty (740-1197) are abundant and well preserved. The Calcutta Museum has a large series, and others may be seen at Rāñcī, Sārnāth, and in the larger European and American museums. Usually in a fine black slate, they are executed with great precision of detail and smoothness of surface, but without deep feeling. The usual subjects recur: in Buddhist art, scenes from the life of the Buddha (the Eight Great Miracles is a favourite subject),

and representations of Bodhisattvas, Tārās, and other divinities; in Hindu art, a wide range of Ṣaiva and Vaiṣṇava images. The metal figures on the whole are superior to those in stone: those in the Bengal Sahitya Parishad collection in Calcutta, and those from Rangpur (partly in the Calcutta Museum) are of exceptional beauty, and so too a number of smaller Hindu bronzes now in the Boston Museum, and the small Buddhist bronzes which have lately been found at Nālandā. The names of Dhīmān and his son Bitpālo are mentioned as those of famous master-founders of Varendra in the eighth and ninth centuries.

SECTION THE TENTH

SOUTHERN INDIA
10TH-18TH CENTURY [1]

IN SOUTHERN INDIA, THE MOST IMPORTANT of the earlier mediæval temples is the great Ṣaiva shrine at Tanjore, an imposing and consistently planned building, with a high pyramidal tower rising over the main shrine: it was in process of construction by Rājarāja Deva about the end of the tenth century. Remains of other Dravidian temples earlier than the middle of the fourteenth century are very few. By the middle of the thirteenth century, however, the style is fully evolved: its leading characteristics include the great gateways (*gopuram*), pillared halls (*kalyāna maṇḍapam*), the recurved cornices, elaborate monolithic columns, and column brackets of rearing horses or monsters

[1] For literature relating to Section Ten see Appendix.

(*yālis* or lions), and the great processional corridors. Most of the South Indian shrines, from 1350 to 1750, consist of an accumulation of erections about a small and inconspicuous central shrine of greater antiquity, the enormous gateways rising high above everything else, and giving their distinctive character to the great cathedral cities. Parts of the temple at Cidambaram, one of the most sacred of all Southern shrines, and dedicated to Naṭarāja, are as old as the tenth or eleventh century, the Nṛtya Sabhā, or Dancing Hall, of thirty-six pillars about eight feet high, being the oldest and most beautiful element. The Pārvatī temple is of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, the great gates still later. There is an early (fourteenth century) *maṇḍapam* in the great temple at Vellūr. The greater part of the temples at Ṣrīraṇgam, Tāḍpatri, Kumbakoṇam,

22. Avalokitesvara: Nepal

23. Vishnu: Bengal

MID-MEDIÆVAL

Ramesvaram, etc., belong to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The ruins at Hampi must be specially mentioned. Hampi, or Vijayangar, was founded in 1336, attained its zenith under Krishna Deva Rāya (1509-1530), and was sacked and destroyed in 1565. Krishna Deva Rāya, to whom the beauty of the city was mainly due, was a veteran soldier and a polished gentleman and a patron of literature : with his two queens, he is worthily commemorated in the beautiful brass figures of the Ṣrī Nivāsa Perumal temple, Tirumalai, Tirupati. To him, and to his queens, is due the most splendid building in the city, the Viṭṭhala temple, the finest building of its kind in southern India, and, in the words of Fergusson, marking the extreme limit in florid magnificence to which the (Dravidian) style advanced. The Kaḍailaikallu temple (Gaṇeṣa),

on the other hand, has plain stone walls and a flat roof line, which lend a peculiar dignity to the pillared *maṇḍapam* before it. There is also an important group of Jain temples, and several remarkable monolithic Brāhmaṇical sculptures (Narasiṁha, Gaṇeṣa).

The great temple of Sundareṣvara and Mīnākṣī at Madura is to modern travellers the best known of the Dravidian temples: it is mainly due to Tirumalai Nāyyak (1623-1659). The most remarkable buildings are the Vasanta Maṇḍapam (Tirumalai's choultry) and the hall of a thousand columns (really nine hundred and eighty-five, the place of fifteen columns being occupied by the Sabhāpati shrine): the pillars of both are extremely elaborate, many having life-sized figures forming part of their mass. The choultry took twelve years to build, from 1623 to 1635.

It should be remarked that in the Madras Presidency and in Travancore the learned tradition of temple-building has been preserved to the present day. The craft traditions are carefully handed down by the Kammālars, or superior craftsmen, who claim an equality with Brāhmaṇs: these Kammālars, and their confreres the Navandanno of Ceylon, largely of South Indian origin, still possess and make use of Sanskrit manuscripts of the *Silpa Sāstras*, or vernacular equivalents. There are interesting Hindu temples of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries at Polonnāruva in Ceylon.

We have still to refer to the great southern school of bronze (actually copper or, more rarely, brass) founding. The roots of this tradition go back to Buddhist art in the South (Amarāvatī, Bezwāda, Ceylon, etc.). The earliest reference to the installation of

Brāhmaṇical metal images, however, seems to be that of the Tanjore temple inscriptions referring to figures of Ṣaiva saints set up by Rājarāja Deva (about 1014). Figures of the deity himself must have been made before this. But, though dancing figures of Ṣiva are found in the Durgā temple at Aihole in the Gupta period and a little later at Elephantā, etc., we do not find amongst the stone sculptures any exact prototype or equivalent of the Naṭarājās and other typical metal images, and it is to be inferred that the Dravidian school of founding, so far as Ṣaiva and Vaiṣṇava images are concerned, developed contemporaneously with the theology and hagiology which they reflect, *i.e.*, about the ninth or tenth century. With the possible exception of the Belur Naṭarāja, of which the date is read by some as equivalent to A.D. 910 (more likely, 1511), the oldest

known southern bronzes appear to be those from the Ṣiva Devāles of Polonnāruva, now in the Colombo Museum, in Boston, Paris, London, etc. These can only be dated by a sense of style: many relatively modern examples are of excellent workmanship. There are probably others older and perhaps finer still in temples or buried.

The majority of southern bronzes, as might be expected, are Ṣaiva. The Naṭarāja type in particular is very well known (Fig. 27). The significance of this *nṛtta mūrti* has been often explained: it represents the cosmic activity (*Pañcakṛṭya*, 'Five Actions') of Ṣiva, the drum in the right hand indicating creation, the fire in left, involution and the dance continuance—a magnificent conception of the Absolute in action (*vyakta*, 'manifested'), complementary

to the *avyakta* (unmanifested) symbol of the *liṅgam*, which forms the *dhruva* (immovable) icon in most Ṣaiva temples. Other forms of Ṣiva commonly met with in metal images are the Bhikṣāṭana Mūrtis, Dakṣina Mūrtis, and the various Umā-sahita Mūrtis in which he is associated with Devī as Umā, Pārvatī or Ṣiva-Kāmī. Of the Ṣaiva saints, Māṇikka Vaçagar (Fig. 28), Sundara Mūrti Swāmi (Fig. 29), Appar Swāmi and Tirujñāna Sambandha Swāmi are represented by cult images, often of considerable importance, the finest examples being those in the Colombo Museum (Figs. 28 and 29). Vaiṣṇava images are rather less frequent, but some fine examples are known (one in the Boston Museum): the forms include Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī, Rāma groups, and dancing and other forms of the young Kṛṣṇa; and of the saints, Hanuman, Garuḍa, the Twelve

Alvārs, and Meikanda Deva. There is also an image of Sūrya in the Colombo Museum.

Of Dravidian painting, the only old example to which I can refer is the fine eight-armed Naṭarāja fresco of the Ṣiva temple at Ettamānūr in North Travancore; but no systematic search for paintings has been made in the older parts and on the more neglected surfaces of Travancore and other Southern temples. More modern wall paintings, though crude in execution, are, however, evidently survivals of an old tradition: some of these are executed on glass. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century portraits of Tanjore represent in the main an offshoot of Mughal art.

SECTION THE ELEVENTH

FURTHER INDIA AND INDONESIA[1]

THE ABORIGINES OF SOUTHERN INDO-China and the Indonesian islands belonged to the Negrito type, which extends from Madagascar to Formosa, the Philippines and New Zealand. At the beginning of the Christian era, northern races of Yünnan and Tibet are moving southwards and establishing themselves in the Irawaddy, Menam and Mekong valleys: at the same time Indian influences are beginning to be felt. About the fourth and fifth centuries, rulers of south Indian origin are in power in Cambodia, Campā, Sumatra and Java. With the exception of Burma, the prevailing religion is Brāhmaṇical (Ṣaiva): there are also original ancestor cults reinforced and modified by Indian ideas. Hīnayāna Buddhism reaches Sumatra

[1] For literature relating to Section Eleven see Appendix.

in the fifth and Java in the sixth century, and appears in Cambodia still later. The period of Buddhist expansion extends from about A.D. 400 to 800. The 'Primitive' and 'Cubic' architecture of this period (Prapatom in Siam, numerous scattered sites in Cambodia, the Mison group in Campā, the Dierig Plateau groups in Java) is markedly Indian in character and purest in form: the finest sculpture, too, though but little is known, dates from the same time. The term 'Cubic' alludes to a characteristic aspect of the architecture, recognizable alike in Cambodia, Campā and Java. There are analogies with the brick temples of the Gupta period and the early Pallava architecture of southern India.

There follows a 'Classical' period in which the various kingdoms attain to the height of their power and magnificence, and to which

belong the most splendid monuments. Towards the end of this period the various languages and literatures take shape. Mahāyāna Buddhism becomes increasingly prominent, intimately associated and bound up with Ṣaivism, as in Nepal. Vaiṣṇava forms of Hinduism also appear more conspicuously. At the same time the apotheosis of kings and the cult of divine royalty become more and more prominent, as a result of which, particularly in Cambodia and Java, we find many posthumous statues of kings made in the form of the deity whom they worshipped, and now indistinguishable from the statues of actual deities. The limiting dates are naturally not quite the same in all the kingdoms but, broadly speaking, extend from A.D. 750 or 800 to A.D. 1100 or 1200. The great monuments include the Schwezigon and Ānanda pagodas

of Pagān in Burma (late eleventh century); Angkor Thom, with the palace and Bayon temple (ninth century) and Angkor Wat (twelfth century), in Cambodia; the Dong Duong group in Campā (ninth century); Caṇḍi Kalāsan (A.D. 778); Mendut, Borobodur (late ninth century) and Caṇḍi Loro Jongrang group at Prambānam (about A.D. 900), in Java. The architecture is at once luxurious and refined, with all its surfaces very richly decorated. Specially to be mentioned are the gallery reliefs of *jātakas* and other Buddhist subjects at Borobodur (Fig. 24); the Angkor Thom palace terrace with the frieze of elephants and *garuḍa* caryatides, and, in the same city, the great Bayon temple with its towers with four faces (representing a *mukha-liṅgam*) and gallery relief; the Angkor Wat, with its reliefs of dancers and long gallery reliefs of Brāhmaṇical mythological and epic

subjects (Fig. 25); the Ananda temple at Pagān, with its Buddhist reliefs and glazed tiles illustrating *jātakas*.

Following upon these four or five centuries of power and splendour comes a gradual political disintegration and æsthetic decadence. This is the consequence in part of the exhaustion of energic and natural resources, and in part of invasions during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. Northern races (Lao-Thai, etc.) are pushed by the Mongols further northwards into Indo-China, the Mongols themselves capture Pagān, the Siamese possess themselves of Western Cambodia and finally of almost the whole kingdom; the Annamites push southwards the Cams (whose civilization perished *in toto* before the eighteenth century); the Mussalmans are possessed of Malacca and make themselves masters of Sumatra and

28 and 29. Mānikka Vāçagar and Sundara Mūrti Swāmi: Ceylon
LATE MEDIÆVAL

finally of Java. Cambodia, under Siamese domination, becomes a Hīnayāna Buddhist country; Burma has remained essentially Buddhist throughout; Bali alone preserves a mixture of Hinduism and Buddhism.

The earlier part of the period of decay is by no means, however, without important and beautiful monuments. Amongst these, may be mentioned the Sajjanālaya-Sukhodaya group in Siam, and all the Siamese Buddhist sculpture of the Ayuthia period; monuments at Binh Dinh, the Cam capital from 1100 onwards; Caṇḍi Jago (1280) and sculptures of Singosāri (1220-1292), and of Majapahit (1294 to 15th century), with its *Rāmāyaṇa* reliefs in *wayang* style, leading to the still surviving Hindu art of Bali. No great monuments date, in any case, from later than the fourteenth century. Apart from the

ancient monuments, it is primarily in the theatre (music and classical dances of Burma, Siam, Cambodia and, above all, Java) that the splendour and spiritual power of the old Indo-Chinese and Indonesian cultures can now be best understood. For the rest, just as in Ceylon, the ancient artistic traditions are only to be recognized and recovered in the form of the folk arts.

SECTION THE TWELFTH

MEDIÆVAL BUDDHIST PAINTING[1]

THE CONTINUITY OF INDIAN PAINTING from the seventh to the sixteenth century is to be inferred from literary references and from the internal evidences of later works. A limited number of actual documents has, however, survived, fairly representing the Buddhist, and, as we shall see later, also the Jain tradition. Of Indian Buddhist manuscripts, we have two from Bengal, on palm leaf (Cambridge MSS. Add. 1464 and 1688), one with painted wooden covers and both with miniatures representing Buddhist divinities and scenes from the life of the Buddha. Quite similar in style are the better known Nepalese MSS., usually texts of the *Aṣṭasahasrikā Prajñapāramitā*. One at Cambridge (MSS.

[1] For references relating to Section Twelve see Appendix.

Add. 1643), one formerly in Calcutta (MS. A 15, contents now missing!), and another in the Vredenberg collection, Calcutta, dated A.D. 1090, the two first containing respectively eighty-five and thirty-seven miniatures: both are of the early eleventh century. A similar text, dated about A.D. 1136, is now in the Boston Museum: there are eighteen miniatures in the text, and the wooden covers are intact, painted with divinities, and scenes from the life of Buddha, in particular, the Nativity and Māra Dharṣaṇa, also a group of the Seven Previous Buddhas and Maitreya. Professor A. N. Tagore owns a slightly later example, of which the covers are painted with *Jātaka* scenes. All these are MSS. on palm leaf: the miniatures are not (as in Persian manuscripts) organically and decoratively associated with the script, but occupy

spaces (*ālekhya-sthāna*) left by the scribe to be filled by the painter. Besides these manuscripts, there are some undoubtedly ancient (tenth century?) Nepalese or, at any rate, Indian paintings of Bodhisattvas found at Tun Huang in Western China, and the same site has yielded what is probably the oldest surviving Tibetan Buddhist Banner.

Taking these Buddhist paintings collectively, we must observe first that they obviously represent a continuation of the older tradition. The composition (arrangement of the figures) and iconography remain unchanged. The scene, however, is much more crowded, and colour is stronger and more formal. The art is essentially ecclesiastical in quality, much less emotional and more purely decorative than before. The glowing colour and accomplished drawing lend to all these manuscript

illustrations a high æsthetic interest, and their rarity, a great historical value. The tradition of manuscript illustration and temple banner painting has survived in Nepal and Tibet up to the present day: many works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are of high merit. The later manuscripts are usually written on thick black paper.

In Ceylon, remains of frescoes illustrating *Jātakas* were discovered on the walls of the Mahā Demala Saya at Polonnāruva (I can hardly say 'are preserved,' as they have been left exposed to sun and rain for many years): these cannot be later than the thirteenth century. A smaller composition at Hindagala, near Kandy, has been regarded as of seventh century date, but seems to me much later (twelfth to fourteenth century). Rock paintings at the Ridī Vihāra may be old. As might

be expected, the mediæval Sinhalese paintings are intermediate in character between those of the Sīgiriya period and the formal decorative art of the eighteenth century still preserved on the walls of many *vihāras* restored by Kīrtti Şrī, notably at Degaldoruwa near Kandy. There are also illustrated Sinhalese Buddhist manuscripts of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A tradition of Buddhist painting has also flourished in Burma, Siam and Cambodia, and survives to the present day in Burma and Siam. A highly sensuous and beautiful school of Buddhist and Hindu painting, on walls, on cloth and in manuscripts, was flourishing in Bali in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and still survives.

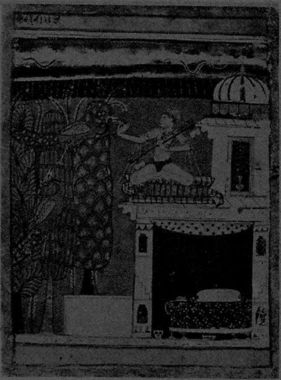
SECTION THE THIRTEENTH

JAIN PAINTING[1]

THE TRADITION OF JAIN PAINTING IS recovered in manuscripts of the thirteenth and subsequent centuries. The text most frequently illustrated is the *Kalpa Sūtra* of Bhadrabahu, containing the lives of the Jinas, most of the space being devoted to Mahāvīra. There are also illustrated cosmologies and cosmological diagrams, and appended to the *Kalpa Sūtra* there is usually to be found the edifying tale of Kālikācārya. The oldest illustrated manuscript is on palm leaf, and dated equivalent to A.D. 1237. It is preserved in the Patan *bhandar*. Several illustrated *Kalpa Sūtras* of the fifteenth century are known (British Museum, India Office, Berlin, Boston, and Nahar collection, Calcutta). The pictures take the form of square

[1] For literature relating to Section Thirteen see Appendix.

30. Page of *Kalpa Sūtra* MS.: Gujarat?



31. Rāginī: Rājasthānī

32. Rāginī: Rājasthānī

LATE MEDIÆVAL [JAIN AND RAJPUT]

panels of the full height of the page, occupying spaces left for the purpose: only in very rare cases is the whole page used. The proper subject to be represented is often indicated by a marginal legend, sometimes by a diagrammatic marginal sketch, the former doubtless due to the scribe, the latter to the artist taking note of his instructions. The same subjects are repeated in the various manuscripts almost without variation: it is very evident that both in composition and style the pictures belong to an ancient and faithfully preserved tradition. In some manuscripts the prevailing ground colour is red, in others there is a ground of gold leaf, which is left uncoloured to represent flesh tints, elsewhere yellow. In the example illustrated (Fig. 30), representing the Tonsure of Mahāvīra, the ground colour is red: Mahāvīra is seated beneath his tree, in a rocky landscape,

attended by the four-armed Indra, who receives the royal robes and gives the monastic robes in return. Heavy clouds (in Indian culture, an auspicious sight) hang low on the high horizon, as in early Rajput paintings; and, as in Sinhalese Buddhist art, the vacant space is occupied by a lotus rosette. This is an art of fine and nervous draughtsmanship, calligraphic, facile and restless, intellectual rather than emotional. The colouring is strong, but less essential than the drawing; the composition formal and traditionally fixed, with abundance of circumstantial detail, giving a valuable picture of mediæval manners. The drawing of the figure is peculiar: angular forms are very characteristic, the nose is sharply pointed, the corners of the eyes extended, as in Indian poetry, to meet the ears, and the further eye in, *profil perdu*, projects beyond the facial outline.

Mediæval Indian art has nothing finer to show than the Jain paintings: only the early Rajput pictures of *rāgas* and *rāginīs* are of equal æsthetic rank.

SECTION THE FOURTEENTH

RAJPUT PAINTING[1]

RAJPUT PAINTING—THE PAINTING OF RĀJASTHĀN and the Panjāb Himālayas under Rajput patronage—constitutes the only considerable body of Hindu painting extant. Wall paintings of the seventeenth century are found at Bikanir, Palitāna, Udaipur, paintings of almost life size at Jaipur, and probably wall paintings at other places in Rajputana: most of the work, however, is executed on paper, and is of comparatively small size. The known paintings cover a period extending roughly from the middle of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth, about three hundred years: the tradition is now almost extinct.

[1] For literature relating to Section Fourteen see Appendix.

The themes are mainly Paurānic, epic, lyrical (Kṛṣṇa legends and Nāyakās), and musical: there is also some portraiture. Illustrated books are almost unknown; but well-known stories (*e.g.*, Nala and Damayantī, the *Devī Mahātmaya* of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, *etc.*) are illustrated by series of drawings, sometimes with inscribed texts. The paintings fall into two groups geographically, Rājasthānī and Pahāṛī: the Pahāṛī paintings again into two groups, the earlier Jammū type, and the later (eighteenth century) Kāngṛā school, developed under the patronage of Rājā Saṁsāra Chand.

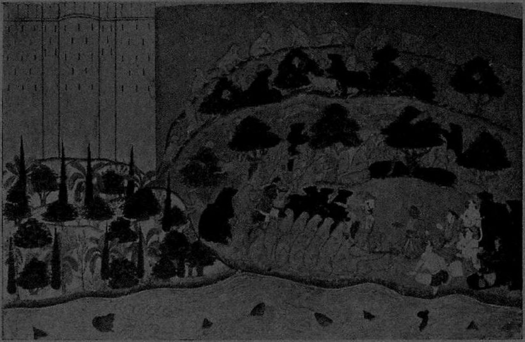
The greatest interest attaches to the sixteenth and early seventeenth century Rājasthānī paintings, which are almost invariably sets of pictures illustrating *Rāgmālās*, poems describing the thirty-six, or sometimes more, musical

modes, the *rāgas* and *rāgiṇīs*. The paintings, like the poems which they illustrate, represent situations of which the emotional colouring corresponds to the feeling or burden of the musical mode. The time of day or night, time of year, and state of the weather appropriate to the mode are also indicated in the paintings. The compositions for particular modes are generally constant; thus, Bhairavī is always represented by a group of women worshipping at a Ṣiva shrine, Āsāvarī by a female snake-charmer, Ṭoḍi by a woman with a *vīṇā*, to the sound of which the wild deer are attracted, Deṣākhya by an acrobatic performance, and so forth. The poem for the Madha-Mādhavī Rāginī (Fig. 32) refers to the pleasant rumbling of the thunder in the monsoon clouds, presaging rain, exciting the peacocks, and, in like manner, the princess

who longs to rest again in her absent husband's arms. Illustrations in the same style to Bāramāsa poems are much rarer. The constancy of the compositions, as well as the character of the art, make it evident that we are recovering here, just as in the case of the illustrations to the Jain manuscripts, the formulæ of an old and well-established tradition. Amongst such formulæ may be cited as examples, the manner of representing clouds, rain and lightning, the representation of hills as conical eminences usually built up of smaller elements, covered with flowers and grasses, and the manner of differentiating between day and night by a variation of the background, without change in the illumination. A first glance at these paintings will suffice to convince the observer that they belong, and could only belong, to a pure Indian

tradition: they are totally unlike Persian art of any period.

The most remarkable quality is one of glowing colour, only to be compared with enamel, though the painting has actually a dead matte surface: pure reds, yellows, and also pinks, greens, and browns, are relieved by pure whites and velvet blacks. Gold, the use of which is probably foreign to indigenous tradition, does not occur until later in the history of Rajput painting. There are large masses of plain colour, against which the buildings, trees and figures stand out with great substantiality: this colour by itself establishes the planes and forms. The composition is architectural, not as in Jain painting, calligraphic. The drawing has magnificent bravura, but is less essential than the colour: one cannot imagine these pictures without their colour. Just as in



32. Siege of Lankā: Pahārī

33. Rāma: Pahārī

34. Krishna: Pahārī

LATE MEDIÆVAL [RAJPUT]

the contemporary literary vernaculars, where words are reduced to bare roots, so in these tertiary Prākrits of pictorial art, the drawing is not explicit, but entirely allusive; that is to say, it is made up of elements which have no unequivocal and unmistakable significance taken alone, but when associated in phrases lend themselves to a very vigorous expression. In later Rajput art, the importance and continuity of the outline are restored, with loss of force, but with greater sweetness and realism. What we may call the fragmentary style of the early Rajput drawing has survived, however, on the circular playing cards of Bikanir, to the present day.

The paintings of the Jammū district, dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, very often have their inscriptions in the Ṭākrī character peculiar to the Ḍogrā hills. The

best known examples are the large *Rāmāyaṇa* pictures in the Boston and New York Museums, in size and composition very suggestive of wall paintings. The colouring is only less vivid than that of the early Rājasthāni pictures: in the example illustrated (Fig. 33) the colour of the ground, extending almost to the top of the picture, is a strong red, the fortress of Laṅkā is golden. The other subjects met with are *rāgas* and *rāgiṇīs* (often different from those of Rājasthān), mythological and rhetorical subjects, and portraits. Chambā paintings must be grouped with those of Jammū, though many Kāṅgṛā paintings are to be found in the Chambā collections. All the Pahāṛī schools are closely interrelated.

The Kāṅgṛā school is a term used with reference to the work done in the whole Kāṅgṛā valley and adjacent Panjāb plains, and

includes also the branch represented by Mola Rām of Gaṛhwāl. It includes an early group of comparatively few examples (Figs. 34, 35) of very sensitive and highly emotional work, with soft powdery colour; and a later and larger group of brush drawings and pictures of the school of Rājā Saṁsāra Chand (late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries). Kāṅgṛā painting is widely different from that of Rājasthān and Jammū. Krishna subjects predominate (the whole of the *Prem Sāgar* may be said to be fully represented); the Eight Nāyakās, usually after the text of the *Rasika Prīyā* of Keṣava Dās, are a favourite theme, and other rhetorical subjects illustrating the stages of Sringara may be found; romances such as Nala and Damayantī and the *Hamīr Haṭh* are treated in detail; there are some naturalistic drawings of flowers and

fruits, and some portraits, but no *Rāgmalās*. This is essentially an art of outline, and exceedingly exquisite as such. The colour, it is true, is tender and charming, particularly in examples like the well-known 'Hour of Cowdust' (Boston), but the drawing alone gives everything essential. The physical type is long-eyed rather than large-eyed, and the forms are willowy and slender. The outline is continuous and made with long strokes of the brush, as at Ajaṇṭā: compared with the early Rājasthānī paintings, the Kāṅgṛā drawing may be described as a highly inflected language. Kāṅgṛā draughtsmanship, indeed, becomes increasingly realistic and explicit, and it is evident that the artists have to a considerable extent studied from nature, and if they have evolved a formula, it is rather their own than directly inherited. Mughal influences are occasionally

to be recognized, particularly in the representation of night scenes, in which dramatic effects of firelight or torchlight are sometimes presented, a method quite foreign to the pure Indian tradition. One can hardly exaggerate the charm of the Kāṅgṛā paintings, and this charm depends equally on the subjects, emotional and lyrical, and the dainty and accomplished expression.

An artist of the name of Mola Rām, descended from Rajput painters originally working at the Mughal court in the time of Shāh Jahān, produced many works in the Kāṅgṛā *qalm*, at Gaṛhwāl, flourishing from about 1760 to 1833. He must have visited Kāṅgṛā. Some of his works are signed.

The subject of Mughal painting lies outside the scope of the present volume. It will be convenient, however, to mention its leading

characteristics. The princes of the Timuria house continued in India the practice of their ancestors in Turkestan, who had been enthusiastic patrons of poets, painters and calligraphers. These influences at first predominate in Mughal painting (the best part of which belongs to the reigns of Akbar, Jahāngīr, and Shāh Jahān), but the school soon assumes a character of its own, more vigorous than that of Persian painting, which was already in decadence under Shāh Abbās the Great. It should not be forgotten that two-thirds of the Mughal painters, as we can see by their names, were Hindus. Mughal art, like the Mughal emperors, gradually became a definitely Indian thing; not, however, at all like the Rajput paintings, but realistic in method and personal and historical in interests. It excels in portraiture; and

authentic likenesses of all the great men of the time, including the Mughal emperors themselves, are still in existence. Later, and particularly in the eighteenth century, there is a much closer assimilation to Hindu art, so far as subject matter is concerned; but the *rāginīs* and *nāyakās* are treated by Mughal painters as material for *art* and not in the Hindu way, in all seriousness and for their own sake. The Delhi miniatures on ivory of the nineteenth century are a decadent offshoot of the Mughal school.

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